

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT F. SMITH

HON. GEORGE J. HOCHBRUECKNER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 13, 1988

Mr. HOCHBRUECKNER. Mr. Speaker, on February 11 of this year the Long Island community lost one of its most loved individuals—Robert Smith, 57, of Brightwaters, newspapers publisher, political activist, and lifelong contributor of time and money to a variety of philanthropic causes, died after a long battle with lung cancer.

Bob Smith grew up in Pittsburgh and moved to Bay Shore, Long Island at the age of 6. He was a graduate of St. Patrick's Grammar School and Bay Shore High School, class of 1949-50. Bob served in the U.S. Marines from 1951 to 1953 as a meteorologist, observer, and apprentice forecaster. After his honorable discharge in 1953, he became interested in politics. It was an interest he would pursue for the rest of his life.

Bob Smith's newspaper career spanned 30 years—the first 12 selling advertising and then as owner and publisher of Pennysaver News of Brookhaven, Inc.

To those who worked closely with Bob Smith for the past 14 years, Bob Smith brought a quality to the political process on Long Island which remains to this day. That was his natural enthusiasm for whatever he was doing, and his absolute conviction that by the sheer force of his will he could turn events in the direction he wanted them to go. Sometimes he prevailed, sometimes he didn't. Yet he never stopped believing that one man, one newspaper, could make a difference.

Bob Smith began his political involvement in 1958 working on Otis Pike's first race to represent eastern Long Island and Congress. Since that time, he has demonstrated his leadership—being an early backer of Mario Cuomo, and as a dedicated supporter of Patrick Halpin. Many elected officials owe a debt of thanks to Bob Smith, including my colleague Tom Downey and myself, Assemblyman I.W. Bianchi, Jr., and Paul Harenberg, Surrogate Court Judge Ernest Signorelli, and Suffolk County Sheriff John Finnerty.

Bob Smith was active in various efforts over the years to raise money for the homeless and the hungry. One of these was the old Pinter Tournament of Stars which has now evolved into Long Island Charities, the biggest Long Island supporter of organizations that help the hungry and the homeless. He also served as chairman of the Suffolk County Chapter of the March of Dimes.

Bob Smith is deeply missed. His family and the people whose lives he touched miss him. I miss him. The people of Suffolk County miss the optimism and the fervor he displayed for the strong belief he held.

On February 20, 1988, the Pennysaver editorial eulogized Bob Smith best in this way:

Bob Smith was by nature an optimist and a doer. Often the world lived up to his expectations and when it didn't he'd set about making the necessary changes so it would in the future. He did a lot, accomplished a lot, and would have accomplished a lot more had he lived longer. But he didn't. So now it's up to the rest of us to roll up our sleeves and work a little harder because the world as good as it is, can use a little tending to.

Thank you Bob Smith for everything.

JOHN STUART GEISLER—32 YEARS OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 13, 1988

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate John Stuart Geisler on the occasion of his retirement after 32 years of distinguished commitment to educational progress in Illinois. Mr. Geisler is one of America's unsung heroes—a man who has devoted his entire life to providing and assuring quality education.

Born in Chicago and raised in Illinois, John Geisler earned both a bachelor's and master's degree in education from Northern Illinois University, pausing in between to serve his country in the military.

He taught sixth grade in Downers Grove for 2 years before moving to Webster Junior High in Waukegan. He taught there for 4 years and served an additional 4 years as assistant principal. In 1967, John Geisler became the principal of Neal Junior High in North Chicago. After 9 years of distinguished service in that capacity, he became the director of academic affairs for the District 64 Board of Education where he has provided consistent leadership for over a decade.

Mr. Speaker, John Stuart Geisler is also a community leader. He is founding president of the Friends of the Waukegan Public Library, and he is also a warden at Waukegan's Christ Episcopal Church where he keeps his classroom skills honed by teaching Sunday School.

Mr. Speaker, we in this Congress are all aware that our role in advancing educational progress is somewhat limited. Real educational advancement requires local leadership and personal excellence. I want all Members of the House to know that John Stuart Geisler possesses these qualities and that he has selflessly devoted his life to the cause of education. I know that all Members join me in wishing Mr. Geisler a happy retirement which is certainly well deserved.

SPEAKER WRIGHT TO RECEIVE HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 13, 1988

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives JIM WRIGHT will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree from Austin College when he addresses the 138th graduating class in Sherman on May 15.

Speaker WRIGHT will join the illustrious company of U.S. Senator LLOYD BENTSEN and Vice President GEORGE BUSH who received honorary degrees from Austin College in 1971 and 1981, respectively.

Austin College is the only 4-year liberal arts college still operating in Texas under its original charter where Texas hero Sam Houston was an original trustee.

As a Member who represents the Fourth Congressional District, which includes Sherman, I pay tribute to the prestigious reputation of Austin College and will be at the Sunday, May 15 graduation. The late Speaker Sam Rayburn represented the Fourth District until his death.

Austin College is recognized as a top educational institution in the Nation and the Sherman area is considered a prime area for industrial development as well as expanding industry. The Sherman Area Chamber of Commerce will provide a special luncheon for all members of the Texas delegation who will be in Sherman for the graduation exercises.

GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND WEEK

HON. CHARLES HATCHER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 13, 1988

Mr. HATCHER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Georgia Industries for the Blind Week in the State of Georgia the week of May 1 to 7. This week was designated to urge all Georgia citizens to join in commending the diligence of the visually impaired members of our work force.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act which gives Federal Government contracts to workshops for blind persons. One of these workshops, Georgia Industries for the Blind, is a division of the Georgia Department of Human Resources and operates facilities in Atlanta, Bainbridge, Griffin, and Savannah for visually impaired members of the Georgia work force. Georgia Industries for the Blind employed over 250 visually im-

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

paired persons last year and had sales of over \$10 million, offered meaningful work and competitive salaries and enabled blind men and women in Georgia to lead productive lives and live more independently.

I commend Gov. Joe Frank Harris for proclaiming May 1 to 7 Georgia Industries for the Blind Week and wish to join in recognizing the achievement of these members of our work force.

A PROCLAMATION—GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND WEEK

Whereas this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act giving federal government contracts to workshops for blind persons; and

Whereas one of these workshops, Georgia Industries for the Blind, operates facilities for visually impaired workers in Atlanta, Bainbridge, Griffin and Savannah; and

Whereas Georgia Industries for the Blind employed over 250 visually impaired persons last year and had sales of over \$10 million; and

Whereas Georgia Industries for the Blind offers meaningful work and competitive salaries, enabling blind men and women to lead productive lives and live more independently: Now, therefore

I, Joe Frank Harris, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim the week of May 1-7, 1988, as "Georgia Industries for the Blind Week" throughout our state, and urge all our citizens to join in commending these diligent members of our workforce.

IN HONOR OF ISRAEL'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 13, 1988

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, May 14, the State of Israel celebrates her 40th year of survival, a triumph of human spirit against overwhelming odds. Forty years ago, David Ben-Gurion signed the Declaration of Independence and proclaimed to the world that the Jewish people, robbed of sanctuary for thousands of years, had regained their beloved homeland.

Over the last 40 years, Israel has been beset by constant hostility from her neighbors, punctuated by bloody wars that threatened her very survival. But Israel has risen from each crisis stronger economically, socially, and militarily. Despite constant oppression, the people of Israel have managed to solve the countless domestic problems of absorbing immigrants from every corner and culture of the world, nurture an expanding industrial economy, and plant a flourishing agricultural wonder in an arid part of our world. Israel's culture, too, is a rich fabric of beauty, art, and education, with world-class symphonic orchestras, theaters, universities, and publishing houses.

In recent weeks, some have questioned whether the current uprising in the West Bank

and Gaza is an indication that Israel has some how "lost its way" from the path of democracy. On the contrary, the sometimes heated debate in Israel over this and many other life-and-death issues is surely evidence that the spirit of democracy is alive and well in the State of Israel. Questions like the fate of the occupied territories, how to secure the northern border with Lebanon, and how to achieve a lasting peace with Israel's neighbors can have an impact on the lives and safety of every Israeli citizen. It is easy for nations that are at peace to live under a democratic government, with all its vulnerabilities and strengths. But for a small country like Israel, besieged from its birth by hostile neighbors who, with the exception of Egypt, continue to deny Israel's very right to exist, to cling so firmly to its democratic roots is truly an inspiration to the world.

The future will present Israel and her people with great trials and great opportunities. Peace cannot and will not come to this strife-torn region of the world until Israel's neighbors recognize her right not only to exist, but to flourish behind safe and secure borders. The United States can continue to play a constructive role in finding a peaceful settlement to this decades-long conflict by urging Jordan, Syria, and the Palestinians to recognize Israel and to accept face-to-face discussions with Israel and, most importantly, by giving the people of Israel the diplomatic and financial support they need to live safely and prosperously in their hard-won, much beloved homeland. Only a strong and secure Israel can be confident enough to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East.

As a young man 40 years ago, I was thrilled by the establishment of the State of Israel, and I was never more proud of my country than when President Harry Truman made America the first nation in the world to grant Israel full diplomatic recognition. I celebrate with the people of Israel their 40th year of statehood. Their history is a remarkable example of fierce determination and triumph of the human spirit, and I wish them enduring peace and prosperity.

A BILL TO AMEND THE CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SPOUSE EQUITY ACT OF 1984

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 13, 1988

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing a bill today to provide assistance to a group of people—the former spouses of civil service employees—who have been forgotten by the Federal Government. These are individuals who were married to Federal employees for 10 years or more during their spouse's period of service in the Federal Government and were then divorced prior to September

14, 1978. Many of these former spouses, most of them women, are now over 60 years of age and are left with very scarce resources. They do not qualify for a spousal annuity because of the date which was set as the effective date of Public Law 95-366, which authorized courts to divide civil service retirement benefits in divorce courts.

This bill would amend the Civil Service Retirement Spouse Equity Act of 1984. It would repeal portions of title 5, section 8341 which now permits former spouses who were divorced before September 15, 1978, to receive survivor benefits only if the retired spouse has not remarried. The elimination of this obstacle for pre-1978 divorces, which precludes a former spouse from receiving an annuity, will then also permit the individual to participate in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program.

At this time, the number of persons affected by the existing provision is uncertain, but those who have been jeopardized by the September 1978 date have indicated the problems they have had to face. Many of them were married and raised their family when it was not the norm for women to pursue an education or a professional career. Now, as they have become older, they are often left without job skills as they try to enter the job market; they are entitled to very little, if any, Social Security. As displaced homemakers, their situation is often very difficult. This bill will enable them to obtain a part of the benefit for which they had worked as a partner to their former spouse.

Also provided for in this legislation is an extension of the deadline for written applications filed with the Office of Personnel Management in order to receive benefits. This will enable provisions of the bill to be better publicized.

Additionally, this bill provides for elimination of retroactive contributions as a requirement when electing survivor annuity benefits for a spouse by a postretirement marriage. An inequitable situation exists presently, in which a Federal employee who remarries after the death of a spouse has to "pay back" the amount of annuity that should have been deducted during the period from the death of the first spouse until a survivor's annuity is approved for the current spouse. In some cases, the amount is \$20,000 in pay back amount, with over \$3,000 in interest. I do not believe that this inequitable situation was envisioned by Congress when the legislation was first passed in 1985. This bill will make the effective date May 7, 1985, so that this unfairness can be remedied. The act also instructs the Office of Personnel Management to notify each annuitant in writing, for purpose of information and refund, within a specified period of time.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in cosponsoring this measure. These are issues of equity for our older Federal employees, retirees and their spouses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.